THE CONSTITUTION AND CANONS

of The Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast

Preamble to the Constitution

IN THE NAME OF GOD, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.
The vision of this Diocese, above all other considerations, is one of a common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and commitment to the trustworthiness and authority of the Holy Scriptures. In keeping with that shared vision and common purpose, as Anglicans, we believe and confess Jesus Christ to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by Him. *John 14:6*

We are guided by the preface to the Book of Common Prayer (1662), which states: "There was never anything by the wit of man so well devised or so sure established which in continuance of time have not been corrupted…" It is with those words in mind that we should well regard and accept that constitutions and canon law must be a reflection of and faithful to the authority and counsel of Holy Scripture. They must rest upon the sure foundation of the Scriptures and always reside under the authority of the Scriptures. Where the decisions of men can be shown to be at odds with the teaching of Holy Scriptures, the Scriptures shall hold preeminence.

We affirm that the primary and necessary rationale and purpose of both constitutions and canon law are, above all considerations, to create a framework within which the inevitability of an institutional common life will nonetheless continue to serve the redemptive mission of the Church. Even with the reliance on Scripture, constitutions and canon laws, in any form and devise, even with the best of intentions, run the risk of creating an avenue for a tyranny of the rule of men rather than the liberty of the gospel. "For freedom Christ has set us free" *(Gal 5:1).* Therefore, we recognize the need for vigilance in ensuring that the Kingdom of God is served over the desires of men.

The Diocese has been formed by its constituent Congregations and Missions and has elected to be a member of the Anglican Church in North America (the "Province"), a participant in the worldwide Anglican Communion, a Fellowship within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church (the "Church"), such membership being subject to the Diocesan Constitution and Canons. The purpose of the Diocese is to carry out diocesan ministry consistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Province, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Holy Scriptures and 1662 Book of Common Prayer as it is in agreement with the same. The Diocese consists of those Congregations and Missions listed in Article XV of this Constitution and those additional Congregations and Missions that may be added from time to time in the manner provided by canon.

I. Fundamental Declarations and Governing Principles

A. Submission to the Province

The Diocese hereby subscribes without reservation to the Fundamental Declarations of the Province as set forth in its Constitution. Subject to Articles XII and XIII, the Diocese acknowledges the authority and powers expressly granted to the Province as set forth in the Constitution and Canons adopted thereby as in effect on the date hereof and adopts this Constitution to be in conformance therewith. All powers not so granted to the Province are reserved to the Diocese and its member Congregations and Missions.

B. Historic Godly Episcopate

We confess the Godly historic Episcopate through Apostolic Succession as an inherent part of the Apostolic Faith and Order, and therefore as integral to the holiness and unity of the Body of Christ.

C. The Bishop Evangelist

Our vision is of a diocese, minimal in structure, whose Bishop is entrusted with the authority and responsibility to concentrate on five main things: defending the Faith, upholding the authority of the Holy Scriptures, the due exercise of episcopal ministry to the clergy and laity, doing the work of an evangelist, and assisting and encouraging the growth of member congregations and the planting of new congregations.

D. Congregation as Agency of Mission

We affirm the local congregations and missions, acting within and with the support of the diocese, as the fundamental agencies of the mission of the Province.

E. Subsidiarity

Wisely has the Province chosen the governance principle of subsidiarity; namely, that whatever can wisely be left to the dioceses should be left to the dioceses, and whatever the dioceses can wisely leave to the local congregations should be left to the local congregations. This Diocese exists to serve and to coordinate the work of its Congregations and Missions; it must never be a usurper of their Godly mission and work.

F. The Mission and Work of the Diocese

The mission of this Diocese is to support the Congregations in extending the Kingdom of God by so presenting Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that people will come to put their trust in God through Him, know Him as Savior, and serve Him as Lord in the fellowship of the Church. A principal work of the Diocese is to encourage and assist the member Congregations to grow and plant new congregations, and to strengthen newly planted congregations to become self-sustaining member Congregations.

G. Lay Participation

The effective ministry of the Diocese is the responsibility of the laity no less than it is the responsibility of the Bishop and clergy. The laity shall participate in the governance of the Diocese on an equal basis with the ordained ministers.

H. A Servant Community

We pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us into fullness as a servant community of mutual respect, support and cooperation, that we may fulfill all righteousness in our mission, our work, and our communal life

together as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. *(Mark 10:45)*

I. Sanctity of Life, Marriage, and Sexual Morality

As Anglicans committed to the authority of the whole canon of Holy Scripture, we are determined, with God's help, to hold and maintain the doctrine, discipline and worship of Christ as the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church has received them, and to transmit the same, unimpaired, to our posterity and for the Glory of God. In keeping with this commitment we faithfully affirm the following:

On Life

"You shall not murder. (Exodus 20:13) "Therefore, recognizing that God, not man, is Creator, we make plain our commitment to the sanctity of all human life as set forth in the Holy Scriptures: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you." *(Jer 1:5)* "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb." *(Psa 139:13)*

On Marriage

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." *(Gen 2:24)* "This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." *(Eph 5:32)* Therefore, we make plain our commitment to the biblical teaching that marriage is a lifelong union between one man and one woman in a faithful covenant with Almighty God.

On Sexual Morality

"You shall not commit adultery." *(Exodus 20:14)* And, "But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints." *(Ephesians 5:3)* Therefore, we make plain our commitment to the sanctity of biblical marriage and sexual morality.

II. Mission and Worship

The mission of the Diocese shall be that of the Province and the Church. In addition, the Diocese exists to equip clergy and congregations to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission *(Mark 12:29-31; Matthew 28:19-20)* by leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ through personal discipleship, evangelism, and the nurturing and planting of congregations. The worship of Almighty God shall be in Spirit and in Truth *(John 4:23)* and may be adapted to a local setting with permission of the Bishop according to Anglican Faith and Order and the standards provided in the Constitution and Canons of the Province.

III. Order, Governance and Discipline

The fundamental agency of mission is the local congregation, acting within and with the support of the Diocese. The order, governance and discipline of the Diocese shall be vested in the Bishops, the Council of the Diocese (the "Council"), the Synod and the Ecclesiastical Courts of the Diocese in conformity with this Constitution and the Canons. Neither the Bishops nor any governing body of the Diocese shall make any edict or take any action that is contrary to the Scriptures, as the Church has received them.

IV. Authority, Composition, and Organization of the Synod

Section 1. Authority

There shall be a Synod that shall serve as the governing body of the Diocese. Each Congregation and Mission shall be represented in the Synod as provided by Canon. The laity and the clergy shall participate in the governance of the Diocese on an equal basis. The Synod shall function as a unicameral body. The Synod shall have authority to adopt Canons and rules of order and discipline, approve resolutions and budgets, and take any other specific action for the conduct of the affairs of the Diocese not in conflict with this Constitution or the Constitution and Canons of the Province, provided that the Synod may always take action to give effect to Articles XII and XIII.

Section 2. Composition

a) The Synod shall be composed of the Bishop or Bishops and the lay and clerical delegates from the member Congregations and Missions of the Diocese.

b) The clerical delegates to the Synod shall consist of the Bishop or Bishops of the Diocese and all of the presbyters and deacons canonically resident in the Diocese and attached to member Congregations or Missions. No clerical member under ecclesiastical discipline of this Church shall be entitled to a seat in the Synod.

c) The lay delegates to the Synod shall consist of the lay delegates from the member Congregations and Missions, authorized by Canon, as well as those exofficio members authorized by Canon.

d) Lay members of the Council, the Chancellor, the Treasurer, the Secretary of the Diocese and four youth delegates between the ages of 16 and 22 chosen by the Council by majority vote of its members, shall be delegates to the Synod ex
officio.

e) Each selected lay delegate and each clerical delegate shall have voice and vote at the Synod. Each ex officio delegate shall have voice but no vote. Proxies shall not be used to vote at meetings of the Synod.

Section 3. Meetings
There shall be an annual meeting of the Synod, and special meetings of the Synod, as provided by Canon. The purpose of this meeting shall be to provide for a time of teaching, equipping the saints for mission, worship, fellowship, and the governance of the Diocese. The lay delegates shall serve for the annual meeting of the Synod for which they are chosen and for any special meeting held prior to the next annual meeting, unless the member Congregation or Mission chooses other delegates in the interim. The Synod may not act by consent but may only act in meeting.

Section 4. Quorum for the Transaction of Business at Synod
One half of the selected lay delegates and one half of the clerical delegates shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at an annual or special meeting of the Synod, but a smaller number constituting a majority of those present may adjourn any such meeting.

Section 5. Presiding Officer of the Synod
The Bishop shall preside at all meetings of the Synod and he may assign the role of presiding officer. In his absence the Council shall appoint a presiding officer.

Section 6. Voting
The Synod shall deliberate and vote as one body and a majority of those voting, all together or by orders, shall be necessary for a decision, except as otherwise provided in this Constitution or the

Canons. There may be a vote by orders if requested by five delegates to the Synod, in which case a majority of those voting in each order shall be necessary for a decision.

V. The Office of Bishop

Section 1. A Bishop's Calling
A Bishop is called by God and the Church acting through the Province to be a shepherd who feeds the flock entrusted to his care. A Bishop is an overseer of the flock and as such is called and given authority and responsibility to propagate, to teach, and to uphold and defend the Faith and Order of the Church, willingly and as God wants him to—not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to his care, but being a wholesome example to the entire flock of Christ. By the tradition of Christ's One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, Bishops are consecrated for the whole Church and are successors of the Apostles through the grace of the Holy Spirit given to them. They are chief missionaries and chief pastors, guardians and teachers of doctrine, and administrators of Godly discipline and governance.

Section 2. Concerning Criteria for the Episcopate
To be a suitable candidate for the episcopate, a person must:

- Be a person of prayer and strong faith;
- Be pious, have good morals and exhibit Godly character;
- Have a zeal for souls;
- Have demonstrated evidence of the fruit of the Holy Spirit;
- Possess the knowledge and gifts which equip him to fulfill the office;
- Be held in good esteem by the faithful;
- Be a male Presbyter at least 35 years old;
- Have demonstrated the ability to lead and grow the Church.

Section 3. Concerning the Selection of Bishops
Bishops shall be selected in conformance with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese and consistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Province. The selection of one to three nominees for Bishop of the Diocese or a Suffragan Bishop or Bishop Coadjutor, shall take place at the annual meeting or at any special meeting of the Synod called for that purpose. The decision shall be by secret ballot and by orders. A majority of the votes cast by lay and clerical delegates voting by orders on the same ballot shall be necessary to a choice for selection as a nominee. Each delegate may vote for as many as there are nominees to be chosen from a slate, which may number more than the nominees to be chosen. The Secretary of the Diocese shall promptly certify the selection of Bishop nominees from which the College of Bishops may select one for the Diocese, as it deems appropriate.

The Council by majority decision of its members shall determine the exact number of nominees to be selected for any given office. If the Synod shall find only one suitable candidate for the office of Bishop, the name will be submitted for consideration by the College of Bishops with the permission of the Archbishop of the Province. In the event that the nominees are rejected by the College of Bishops, another meeting of the Synod shall promptly be called by the Bishop or the Council. Upon the choice of a Bishop-elect by the College of Bishops, the Archbishop shall take order for the consecration and/or installation of such Bishop in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of the Province.

Section 4. Concerning the Required Declaration at Consecration
No candidate shall be consecrated a Bishop in the Diocese until he shall have subscribed to the

following declaration, which, after subscription, shall be provided to the Archbishop, the Secretary and to each member of the Council:

"I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to salvation, and I consequently hold myself bound to conform my life and ministry thereto, and I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of Christ as this Church has received them."

Section 5. Further Provisions
Further provisions consistent with this Constitution regarding the qualifications for the office of Bishop, the manner of selecting Bishops, and the powers and responsibilities of Bishops may be set forth in the Canons.

VI. Vacancy in the Office of the Bishop

Section 1. Upon the Death of the Bishop
Upon the death of the Bishop, if there be no Bishop Coadjutor or Bishop Suffragan, the Council shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese. Upon the request of the Council, the College of Bishops may appoint an Acting Bishop to be in charge of the Diocese until a Bishop can be selected.

Section 2. Upon the Disability or Absence of the Bishop
If the Council upon careful deliberation determines that the Bishop is under a disability, or has absented himself from the Diocese or failed or refused to perform his duties for more than 30 days without permission of the Council, it may with the consent of the Archbishop declare the Office of the Bishop vacant. In such case, the Bishop Suffragan or Bishop Coadjutor shall take charge until the Council declares the Bishop restored. If there be none, the Council shall serve as the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese until a new Bishop is consecrated and/or installed by the Archbishop on an interim basis.

Section 3. Elevation of Bishop Suffragan or Bishop Coadjutor
A Bishop Suffragan may not become the Bishop of the Diocese unless he is so nominated at a general meeting of the Synod or a special meeting called for that purpose, and in either event his nomination shall be subject to the choice of the College of Bishops as provided in Article IV above. A Bishop Coadjutor shall become the Bishop upon the death, retirement or removal of the Bishop.

VII. The Officers of the Diocese

In addition to the Bishop, and the Bishop Suffragan or the Bishop Coadjutor, if there be such, the officers of the Diocese shall be the President (as per Article XIV), the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Chancellor and the Registrar, whose selection and duties shall be described by Canon. The Canons may also provide for such other officers as are authorized by the Synod. Further provisions consistent with this Constitution regarding the qualifications for the office of such officers, the manner of their appointment or selection, and the powers and responsibilities of such officers shall be set forth in the Canons.

VIII. Provision for a Council of the Diocese

There shall be a Council of the Diocese (the "Council") that shall perform those duties required by the Constitution and Canons of the Church and of the Diocese. The Council shall be composed of twelve (12) members, provided that half of the members shall be clergy and half of the members shall be of the

laity. The members of the Council shall be appointed by the Bishop (2 members) and selected by the Synod (10 members) to staggered terms as provided by Canon. The chairman of the Council shall be the Bishop.

In the event the Council is deadlocked as to any matter, the Chairman shall have authority and responsibility to make the final decision. The Bishop shall give notice of all meetings of the Council. The Council will work to make its activities as transparent as possible to the congregations and individuals of the Diocese consistent with the Canons, including provision of a reasonable comment period. The members of the Council shall not be entitled to compensation or to reimbursement of expenses for service as a member of the Council, except as may be provided elsewhere with respect to indemnification, and except as the Synod may, but need not, provide by annual determination.

IX. Provision for Working Groups, Convocations, and Deaneries

The Synod may establish, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority decision, such working groups it deems necessary. The Canons applicable to the Council or the Synod as to meetings, action without meetings, notice and waiver of notice, quorum and voting requirements shall apply to such working groups, as appropriate. The Bishop shall have the right to appoint a Bishop's Advisory Council in his sole discretion to provide advice as requested to the Bishop. The Bishop, with the advice and consent of at least two thirds (2/3rds) of the members of the Council of the Diocese, may appoint working groups to study and report on particular matters assigned by the Bishop. Working groups so established by the Bishop shall establish their own rules of procedure. The Council shall have no authority to establish a committee or working group.

No working group created under this article shall exist for a term of more than one year, and at the expiration of its term, it shall cease to exist unless reestablished by the same procedure as was required for its original establishment. The members of working groups established pursuant to this article shall not be entitled to compensation or to reimbursement of expenses for service as a member of a working group, except as may be provided elsewhere with respect to indemnification, and except as the Synod may, but need not, provide by annual determination. In addition, after consultation with the Council, for the purpose of expanding the mission of the Diocese, the Bishop may form Deaneries and/or Convocations to reside under his authority, consistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese. Convocations remain under the authority of the Bishop until such time as they are deemed ready by decision of the Province to function as a Diocese in Formation.

X. Ecclesiastical Courts

There shall be Ecclesiastical Courts of the Diocese for the application of Church discipline and the proper administration and interpretation of the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese. The Ecclesiastical Courts shall conform to the standards established in the Canons of the Province. The membership of the Ecclesiastical Courts, their jurisdiction, procedures and terms of office shall be established by Canon.

XI. On Holy Orders

Affirming the ministry of both men and women in the offices of the Church, this Diocese will ordain both men and women for the Permanent Diaconate. In keeping with Scriptural warrant and consistent with the fullness of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, this diocese will ordain to serve in the orders of Priest and Transitional Deacon only male candidates. Under the guiding principle that has long precedent in the Church that the orders of both the Priesthood and the Diaconate are

extensions of the ministry of the Bishop, the Bishop has both authority and responsibility to ensure that anyone ordained be extended only those faculties of ministry for which they are both gifted and equipped.

XII. Reserved Rights of Congregations and Missions

All property, real, personal, tangible and intangible, owned or held by or on behalf of a Congregation or Mission which is a member of this Diocese, now and in the future, is and shall be solely and exclusively owned by the Congregation or Mission, free of any trust, right of assessment, or other claim in favor of the Diocese or the Province. Each Congregation and Mission reserves the right to withdraw from the Diocese at any time with the consent of a majority (or more, if required by such body's governing documents) of the members of the Congregation or Mission eligible to vote, by a vote taken at a meeting of the members of the Congregation or Mission called for that purpose. A withdrawing Congregation or Mission shall give notice of its withdrawal to the Ecclesiastical Authority, including the date thereof, and shall retain all property, real, personal, tangible and intangible, owned or held by or on behalf of the Congregation or Mission.

XIII. Reserved Rights of the Diocese

Diocesan property shall not be subject to any trust, right of assessment or other claim by the Province. The Diocese reserves the right to withdraw from the Province at any time with the consent of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the delegates entitled to vote at a meeting of the Synod called for that purpose. Upon any withdrawal, the Diocese shall give notice to the Province, including the date thereof, and shall retain all property, real, personal, tangible and intangible, owned or held by or on behalf of the Diocese.

XIV. Incorporation; Operation; Guarantees; Derivatives

The Diocese shall initially incorporate in accordance with the laws of the State where a majority of its Congregations and Missions are located. The Bishop shall be the President of the corporation and the Council its Board of Directors. Operation of the corporation shall be as provided by this Constitution, the Canons and applicable state laws. Unless approved in advance by the Synod, the Diocese shall not guarantee, directly or indirectly, any loan or other commitment for the benefit of a Congregation, Mission or any other person, nor may the Diocese enter into any investment or contract commonly referred to as a "derivative".

XV. Congregations and Missions of the Diocese

The following Congregations and Missions are the founding entities of the Diocese and shall hereafter be deemed Congregations of the Diocese:

All Saints Anglican Church – Baton Rouge, LA – ADOTS
HopePointe Anglican Church – The Woodlands ,Texas – ADOTS
Living Grace Anglican Church – Katy ,Texas – ADOTS
Living Stones Anglican Church – Houston, Texas – ADOTS
Missio Dei Anglican Church – Houston Texas – Greenhouse/ADOTS
St. Timothy's Anglican Church – Spring, Texas – ADOTS
Savior Anglican Church – Magnolia, Texas – ADOTS

Additional Congregations and Missions may be added as provided by Canon. Subject to their prior right of withdrawal, a Congregation or Mission may be removed from membership as provided by

Canon.

XVI. Adoption and Amendment

This Constitution shall be provisionally adopted by the convening group desiring to become a diocese in the Church, subject to ratification at the initial Synod by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the entire number of delegates eligible to vote at the initial Synod. This Constitution may be amended by the Synod by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the entire number of delegates eligible to vote at any annual meeting of the Synod. If approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Synod, the amendment shall lie over to the next annual meeting of the Synod, and if again approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, the Constitution shall then stand altered or amended as proposed.

Certification

We Certify that the foregoing is the text of the Constitution of the Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast adopted provisionally by the delegates to the organizational synod of the Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast, meeting at The Woodlands, Texas on May 5, in the year of our Lord 2012, and subject to ratification by the Anglican Church of North America.

The Rev. Clark W. P. Lowenfield
Chairman of the Steering Team Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast

The Rev. Jennifer Scherzer
Secretary and Registrar Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast

Foreword to the Canons

of The Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast

The single and proper role of canon law in guiding the common life of this diocese is to serve rather than hinder its mission focus: the salvation of souls. Therefore, the foremost goal and primary purpose of the Canons of the Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast is to provide a flexible framework of governance that is consistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America (the Church) and faithful to the teaching of Holy Scripture.

While legal structures can be helpful in guiding the common life of a diocese, Holy Scripture must be our primary guide in creating and sustaining Christian community. Just as we have affirmed in the Constitution of this diocese, we also, here, affirm that the Canons and any associated Customaries must always be under the authority of Holy Scripture. Similarly, where Holy Scripture does not speak clearly with regards to governance and polity, neither restriction nor requirement of canon law should be imposed that may hinder the mission of the diocese.

It is with this understanding that the following Canons are faithfully and prayerfully submitted for Consideration and Affirmation by the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast.

Date:

Signed:

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TITLE II: ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF CONGREGATIONS AND MISSIONS
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TITLE I: ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE DIOCESE

Canon 1 Official List of the Clergy of the Diocese

Section 1. A list of all duly ordained Presbyters and Deacons who are canonically resident or licensed to work in the Diocese shall be maintained by the Ecclesiastical Authority and kept current by the Registrar and on file in the central office of the Diocese. The list shall contain the addresses and licensed positions of the clergy and shall be made available to members and their delegates at least 30 days in advance of any meeting of the Synod.

Section 2. The official list shall be available to the Synod on the first day of its meeting and shall be the basis for determining a quorum as provided in Article IV section 4 of the Constitution.

Section 3. Every member of the clergy canonically resident or licensed in the Diocese and entitled to vote shall attend every meeting of the Synod unless excused by the Ecclesiastical Authority.

Section 4. The Bishop shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese. During any vacancy in the office of Bishop, the Bishop Coadjutor or, if there be none, the Bishop Suffragan shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese. If there be no Bishop, Bishop Coadjutor, or Bishop Suffragan, the Council of the Diocese shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese.

Canon 2 Lay Representation in Synod

Section 1. A list of all duly selected lay delegates of Congregations and Missions of the Diocese shall be compiled and maintained and kept current by the Registrar. The list shall contain the addresses and other appropriate contact information of the lay delegates and shall be made available to members and their delegates at least 30 days in advance of any meeting of the Synod. Any lay delegate whose name is not on the list and wishing to participate at the Synod shall bring the omission to the attention of the Registrar. A member of the clergy who is resident in the Diocese but is not licensed to work in the Diocese shall not serve as a lay delegate.

Section 2. Each Congregation and Mission shall be entitled to two lay delegates. In addition, each congregation or mission whose average Sunday attendance (ASA) exceeds 50 shall be entitled to one additional lay delegate for each 100 or fraction thereof above the first 50, except that the total number of lay delegates from any Congregation or Mission shall not exceed seven (7). ASA means the Average Sunday Attendance of a Congregation of the Diocese for the previous calendar year, including clergy, members, visitors, and children. ASA may include regular weekly corporate worship and shall be based upon the most recent annual report of each Congregation or Mission to the Diocese.

Section 3. The governing authority of each Congregation shall select its delegates according to its respective procedures with no more than one alternate for each lay delegate so chosen. Each Mission shall select its lay delegates according to its respective rules with no more than one alternate for each lay delegate so chosen.

Canon 3 Congregations Subject to Other Jurisdictions

Those Congregations and Missions within the boundaries of the Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast who are in canonical relationship with the Church but are under other jurisdictions will be welcomed into affiliation with this Diocese after written request from their Rector/Senior Pastor (made after an affirmative decision consistent with the Congregation's governing procedures) to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority already having jurisdiction and after the Bishop of the Diocese approves their affiliation. After affiliation they shall be accorded full participation, at the Bishop's discretion, in the shared life and ministry of this Diocese.

Canon 4 Meetings of the Synod

Section 1. The Synod shall have annual meetings and may also have special meetings called for a specific purpose.

Section 2. The Bishop, with the advice and affirmation of the Council of the Diocese, shall determine the date, time, and place of meetings of the Synod. The Office of the Bishop, in conjunction with the Secretary of the Diocese, shall develop and maintain a Customary on Procedures for the Calling of Annual and Special Meetings of the Synod, consistent with the teaching of Holy Scripture, the Constitution of this Diocese, and the Constitution and Canons of the Church.

Section 3. The Bishop, with the advice of the Chancellor, shall propose Rules of Order for adoption by the Synod at the outset of each meeting. The Bishop shall lead the Synod.

Canon 5 Delegates of the Diocese to the Provincial Council and Assembly of the Church

The Synod of the Diocese shall have opportunity to discuss and affirm the selection of delegates to the Provincial Council and the Assembly of the Church selected by the council of the Diocese and the Bishop. The Diocese shall make application to the Executive Committee of the Council of the Church for certification of the allowable number of its delegates to the Assembly. The Diocese shall report the names and contact information of its delegates, and such alternates as it deems prudent to name, not less than sixty (60) days prior to a meeting at the Assembly.

Canon 6 Subdivision of the Diocese into Regions or Districts

The Office of the Bishop shall develop and maintain a Customary on the Subdivision of the Diocese into Regions or Districts consistent with Article IX of the Constitution of this Diocese and the Constitution and Canons of the Church. When it shall appear to the Ecclesiastical Authority, in consultation with the Council of the Diocese, that it would advance the mission and ministry of the Diocese, the Ecclesiastical Authority may authorize the organization of additional regions or districts within the Diocese.

Canon 7 The Council of the Diocese

The Diocese shall have a Council of the Diocese chosen agreeably to Article VIII of the Constitution of the Diocese and the Constitution and Canons of the Church with such authority as therein provided and such other authority and responsibility as the Synod may determine by canon or resolution. The members of the Diocesan Council shall serve staggered terms of three years and the initial Diocesan Council shall be divided into appropriate groups of different terms to give effect to the provision of

staggered terms. Election of new Diocesan Council members will take place annually at the Diocesan Synod.

Canon 8 The Chancellor

The Chancellor of the Diocese, appointed by the Bishop, shall be and remain a communicant in good standing and a member of a Congregation of this Diocese. He or she shall be learned in the law and licensed to practice in the state of incorporation of the Diocese and in the state in which the principal office of the Diocese is located, if different. The Chancellor shall have responsibility for the legal affairs of the Diocese and shall serve as counsel to the Bishop and the Council of the Diocese.

Canon 9 The Secretary

The Secretary of the Diocese, appointed by the Council of the Diocese, shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Synod and shall submit such reports as the Bishop may request.

Canon 10 The Treasurer

The Treasurer of the Diocese, appointed by the Council of the Diocese, shall be the custodian for all of the funds of the Diocese. The Treasurer shall be bonded or insured in such amount or in such manner as the Council of the Diocese from time to time shall deem appropriate and shall file an annual report to the Synod on the financial status of the Diocese as well as periodic reports of account for all funds under his or her custody or control.

Canon 11 The Registrar

The Registrar, appointed by the Council of the Diocese, shall be the custodian of official records of the Diocese and shall issue such certification as may be directed by the Bishop or the Council of the Diocese.

Canon 12 Finance Team

Section 1. If established by the Synod, there shall be a Finance Team of the Diocese appointed by the Bishop and the Council of the Diocese. The Finance Team shall assist the Treasurer in preparing the annual budget of the Diocese and shall issue guidelines for audits and investment management. The records and accounts of the Treasurer shall be subject to audit by independent auditors on an annual basis. The Finance Team shall issue periodic reports to the Bishop and the Council of the Diocese on the financial condition of the Diocese. If a Finance Team is not established, its functions shall be performed by the Council of the Diocese.

Section 2. With whatever assistance it may require, the Finance Team shall oversee the insurance and benefits programs for the clergy of the Diocese and its personnel.

Canon 13 Team on Constitution and Canons of the Diocese

The Synod may establish a Team on Constitution and Canons from the delegates to the Synod, with the Chancellor, or other qualified appointee, as a member. If a Team on Constitution and Canons is not established, its functions shall be performed by the Chancellor and the Council of the Diocese.

Canon 14 Nominations for Bishop

Section 1. An Episcopal Nominations Team may be selected by the Synod. The Nominations team shall have seven members: the Chair of the Episcopal Nominations Team, three clergy members, and three lay members. The Chair of the Nominations Team may be a clergy or lay person. The Chair of the Episcopal Nominations Team shall be a member of the Council of the Diocese. The Episcopal Nominations Team shall be responsible for receiving and publishing all nominations for nominees for Bishop, Bishop Coadjutor, and Bishop Suffragan.

Section 2. All nominations must include an acceptance of the nomination in writing by the nominee and support of the nomination in writing by the Congregation's governing body in which the nominee is serving.

Section 3. The Episcopal Nominations Team shall prayerfully review all names placed in nomination to determine whether they meet the criteria established by the Church. Through a prayerful process of discernment, the Team shall reach a consensus decision as to which names shall be offered for consideration by the Synod.

Section 4. If an Episcopal Nominations Team is not established, its functions shall be performed by the Council of the Diocese.

TITLE II: ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF CONGREGATIONS AND MISSIONS

Canon 1 Membership in the Diocese; Governing Authority of Congregations and Missions

Section 1. The founding Congregations of the Diocese are set forth in the Constitution. Any other group of the faithful may seek to affiliate as a Congregation or Mission as provided in this Canon. A Congregation normally shall consist of a group of the faithful meeting together in regular worship, with an Average Sunday Attendance of at least fifty (50). Any group meeting these minimum specifications may apply to be recognized as a Congregation. Any group *not* meeting these minimum specifications may apply to the Council of the Diocese to be recognized as a Mission or a Congregation, pending the application to and approval of the Executive Committee of the Church for a waiver of these minimum specifications.

Section 2. Any group of the faithful seeking to affiliate as a Congregation or Mission shall submit its application to the Ecclesiastical Authority and the Council of the Diocese through The Office of the Bishop on forms provided by The Office of the Bishop. Upon approval by the Ecclesiastical Authority and the Council of the Diocese, the Bishop will receive the individual members of the group into the Church. A Congregation or Mission joining or transferring into the Diocese shall agree in writing to become subject to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese.

Section 3. The governance of each Congregation shall be vested in the Rector/Senior Pastor and any additional duly constituted governing authority of the Congregation established by the Congregation's bylaws.

Section 4. The Bishop shall be the governing authority of a Mission that is sponsored by the Diocese, except as he may delegate such authority. The governing authority of the sponsoring Congregation shall be the governing authority of a Mission that is sponsored by a Congregation, except as the governing authority may delegate such authority. A Mission may have a Council to assist in the administration of its affairs. The Vicar/Pastor of a Mission, appointed as such by the Bishop or the sponsoring Congregation, as applicable, shall be in charge of the Mission, subject to the authority of the Bishop or the sponsoring Congregation, and shall preside over all meetings of the Council.

Section 5. A Congregation or Mission attached to another Diocese of the Church may, after consultation with its Bishop or other Ecclesiastical Authority, make application to the Bishop of the Diocese to become a member of this Diocese. The Congregation or Mission may be received into this Diocese upon approval by the Council of the Diocese. Any such Congregation or Mission shall agree in writing to become subject to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese.

Section 6. Any Congregation or other organized group of the faithful of another denomination desiring to become a member of this Diocese shall first apply through The Office of the Bishop. Any such Congregation or other organized group of the faithful of another denomination joining the Diocese shall agree in writing to become subject to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese.

Canon 2 Clergy, Local Governance, and The Pastoral Relationship

Section 1. The Rector/Senior Pastor of a Congregation may be selected by the Congregation's governing body (e.g. Vestry) or other duly constituted team selected by the Congregation for such purpose. The Rector/Senior Pastor, shall select all assistant clergy who shall serve at the pleasure of the Rector/Senior Pastor. A prayerful process shall be undertaken in the calling of a Rector/Senior Pastor to a Congregation, and the Congregation's governing body shall consult with the Bishop before extending an offer to a candidate. The relationship between the Rector/Senior Pastor and the Congregation is one of mutual trust and dependence in carrying out the ministry of the local Congregation. As the spiritual leader of the Congregation, the Rector/Senior Pastor should have the full cooperation and support of the Congregation. The Congregation in turn should expect the Rector/Senior Pastor to model the servant leadership required of all in the fundamental declarations and governing principles of the Constitution of the Diocese *(Mark 10:45)*. In all matters the Rector/Senior Pastor and the Congregation shall observe the principles of mutual submission called for by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:3 and Ephesians 5:22.

Section 2. The Rector/Senior Pastor and such other members of the Congregation, selected according to the Congregation's bylaws, shall constitute the Congregation's governing body.

Section 3. Except for reason of age or disability, a Rector/Senior Pastor may not resign as Rector/Senior Pastor without giving the remainder of the Congregation's governing body such notice as it may require. A Rector/Senior Pastor may not be removed against his will except as hereinafter provided or as provided in Canon 3 of this Title.

Section 4. Whenever a Rector/Senior Pastor or a majority of the remainder of the Congregation's governing body believe the pastoral relationship between the Rector/Senior Pastor and the Congregation to be imperiled or hindered by reason of dissension, either or both may present the matter to the Bishop.

Section 5. Upon notification of such imperilment or hindrance, the Bishop shall promptly seek reconciliation by whatever means he believes appropriate. The Bishop, or his appointee, shall hold conferences with the Rector/Senior Pastor and the remainder of the Congregation's governing body, who shall participate cooperatively in the process. The Bishop may issue such interim recommendations appropriate to the cause before issuing a final judgment. Prior to issuing a final judgment, the Bishop shall consult with the Council of the Diocese and the Chancellor of the Diocese. The Council of the Diocese may hold conferences with the Congregation's governing body before rendering its advice to the Bishop. At such conferences the parties may be heard and be represented by a person or persons of their choice.

Section 6. The final judgment shall be made by the Bishop, after praying over the matter and taking the recommendations of the Congregation's governing body and the Council of the Diocese into consideration. The recommendations of the Congregation's governing body and the Council of the Diocese may include a leave of absence with pay for the Rector/Senior Pastor, a continuation of the pastoral relationship on a provisional basis, or dissolution of the pastoral relationship.

Section 7. If the relationship is to be dissolved, the terms of judgment may include terms and conditions for compliance by both parties and may include an equitable financial settlement which is just and compassionate. The Rector/Senior Pastor or the remainder of the Congregation's governing body may petition the Council of the Diocese for a review and modification of the financial terms of the judgment. The Bishop shall in all cases render pastoral support to the Rector/Senior Pastor. Upon the Bishop's judgment of dissolution, the Bishop shall direct the Secretary of the Diocese to record the dissolution.

Section 8. If at the time of a need for episcopal intervention in the relationship between a portion of the Congregation's governing body and a Rector/Senior Pastor there be no Bishop, Bishop Coadjutor or Bishop Suffragan, the Council of the Diocese shall appeal to the Archbishop for the appointment of a Bishop of another diocese to serve in the matter, under the provisions of this Canon.

Section 9. If for any reason the Rector/Senior Pastor shall refuse to comply with the judgment of the Bishop, the Bishop may suspend the Rector/Senior Pastor from the exercise of the ministry of a Presbyter until he complies with the judgment. In the case of the Congregation's governing body, the Bishop may request the Council of the Diocese to convert the Congregation to a Mission under the supervision of the Bishop until they have complied with the judgment or conveyed formal declaration to depart from the Diocese.

Canon 3 Removal of the Rector/Senior Pastor

A Congregation may only request the removal of the Rector/Senior Pastor from his office, for cause, with the consent of the Bishop after showing that cause for removal exists. If a portion of the Congregation's governing body desires the Bishop to remove the Rector/Senior Pastor for cause, it shall give prior notice to the Bishop and provide an opportunity for him to consult with all or a portion of the Congregation's governing body prior to any action in the circumstances. As used in this Canon, the term "cause" shall mean the Rector/Senior Pastor has been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude, or the Congregation's governing body has been presented with evidence that it deems substantial and credible of any of the following: (i) the commission of a crime involving moral

turpitude, (ii) habitual insobriety or drug addiction, (iii) dishonest or fraudulent conduct, (iv) embezzlement, theft or intentional destruction of property, or (v) sexual misconduct.

Canon 4 Organization and Business Affairs of a Congregation or Mission

Section 1. Congregations and Missions shall incorporate under the laws of the jurisdiction where located.

Section 2. Every member of the Congregation's governing body shall affirm the following declaration and promise:

"*I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary for salvation and I do yield my hearty consent to the doctrines, discipline and worship of Christ as the Anglican Church in North America has received them. I promise that I will faithfully lead and serve as I am called as a member of this local Congregation to the best of my ability.*"

Section 3. The Congregation's governing body shall be responsible for the management of the Congregation's business affairs, including the following:

a. Support of the Rector/Senior Pastor and his family, including contributions to a retirement plan or pension;

b. An adequate place for regular worship and the necessary hymnals, prayer books, and Bibles for use by the Congregation;

c. The musical program of the Congregation, which shall be under the leadership of the Rector/Senior Pastor;

d. The financial compensation of all staff members;

e. An adequate insurance program for the Rector/Senior Pastor and staff, and proper insurance to protect all property, real and personal, of the Congregation and all persons attending congregational services and functions;

f. Compliance with the Constitution and Canons of the Church and of this Diocese;

g. Establishment of a Biblically-based program of financial giving by members of the Congregation;

h. Conformity (as nearly as possible) with the Congregation's annual financial commitment made to the Diocese;

i. Support of the Rector/Senior Pastor in all aspects of his ministry; and

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j. Approval of and compliance with all contracts and other obligations entered into by the Congregation.

Canon 5 The Laity; Membership Requirements

Section 1. The people of God are the chief agents of the mission of the Church to extend the Kingdom of God by so presenting Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that people will come to put their trust in God through Him, know Him as Savior, and serve Him as Lord in the fellowship of the Church. The effective ministry of the Church is the responsibility of the laity no less than it is the responsibility of the Bishop and the Presbyters and Deacons. It is incumbent for every lay member of the Church to become an effective minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, one who is spiritually qualified, gifted, called, and mature in the Faith. This Diocese may, by Canon or Customary, establish standards for the ministry of the laity.

Section 2. The laity of the Diocese shall willingly enter into a discipleship process designed to prepare people for membership in the Church and help members become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ who are fully incorporated into the Body of Christ. The discipleship process shall include instruction of all candidates for membership in the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as the Church has received them.

Section 3. Membership in a Congregation or Mission shall be determined by the Rector/Senior Pastor and the Congregation's governing body.

Canon 6 Financial Affairs of Congregations and Missions

The Office of the Bishop shall develop and maintain a suitable Customary on Guidelines for Financial Affairs of Congregations and Missions consistent with the teaching of Holy Scripture, the Constitution of this Diocese, and the Constitution and Canons of the Church.

Canon 7 Congregation and Mission Property

Section 1. All property, real, personal, tangible and intangible owned by or held by or on behalf of a Congregation or Mission which is a member of this Diocese, now and in the future, is and shall be solely and exclusively owned by the Congregation or Mission, free of any trust, right of assessment, or other claim by the Diocese or the Church.

Section 2. The Diocese may own its own property to be held in whatever form determined by the Council of the Diocese.

Canon 8 Officers, Records, and Reports of Congregations and Missions

Section 1. In addition to the Rector/Senior Pastor or Vicar/Pastor, a Congregation or Mission will have officers allowed by its bylaws and consistent with the State's incorporation laws.

Section 2. The Office of the Bishop shall develop and maintain a suitable Customary on Records and Reports of Congregations and Missions consistent with the Constitution of this Diocese and the Constitution and Canons of the Church.

Section 3. The Bishop, with the advice and consent of the Council of the Diocese, may take appropriate action should any Congregation or Mission fail to comply with the required record reporting in the Customary on Records and Reports of Congregations and Missions, including, but not limited to, disqualification of the representatives from participation at the Annual Meeting of the Synod.

TITLE III: WORSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS IN THE CONGREGATIONS AND MISSIONS OF THE DIOCESE

Canon 1 Of Translations of the Bible

The Lessons used in services of public worship shall be read from the English Standard Version and such other translations of the Holy Scriptures as authorized and approved by the Bishop.

Canon 2 Of the Standard Book of Common Prayer

Section 1. The Book of Common Prayer as set forth by the Church of England in 1662, together with the Ordinal attached to the same, are received as a standard for the Diocese's doctrine, discipline, and worship and, with the Books which preceded it, as the standard for the tradition of worship in the Diocese. Until such time as a Book of Common Prayer for use in the Church has been adopted, other authorized Books of Common Prayer may be permitted for use in this Church as determined by the Bishop.

Section 2. It is understood that there is a diversity of uses in the Church. In order to use these rich liturgies most advantageously, it is the responsibility of the Bishop of this Diocese to ensure that the forms used in Public Worship and the Administration of the Sacraments be in accordance with Anglican Faith and Order and that nothing be established that is contrary to the Word of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

Canon 3 Of the Due Celebration of the Lord's Day

All members of the Congregations and Missions of this Diocese are called to celebrate and keep the Lord's Day by regular participation in public worship, by hearing the Word of God read and taught, by partaking of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and by other acts of devotion and deeds of charity, according to God's holy will and pleasure.

Canon 4 Of the Administration of the Dominical Sacraments

Section 1. General:

a. The Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion shall be administered by the duly ordained and licensed clergy of this Diocese in accordance with their order of ministry. This provision shall not preclude the administration of emergency baptism by any baptized person.

b. It is normative that baptized children and adults be presented for confirmation after instruction in accordance with section 2 of this canon.

Section 2. Concerning Christian Formation: All Clergy shall take care that all within their Congregations and Missions are instructed in the doctrine, sacraments, and discipline of Christ, as the Lord has commanded and as they are set forth in the Holy Scriptures, in the Book of Common Prayer, and in the Church Catechism.

Section 3 Concerning the Holy Communion:

a. Only Bishops and Presbyters shall preside at the Celebration of the Holy Communion;

b. All Christians who have been baptized, with water (when practically available), in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit are welcomed to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion in this Diocese. The qualifications concerning rightly and worthily receiving the Supper of the Lord with faith are provided in Article XXVIII of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion;

c. The admission of baptized young children to the Holy Communion is permitted in this Diocese.

Canon 5 Of the Music of the Congregation or Mission

It shall be the duty of every Rector/Senior Pastor or Vicar/Pastor of a Congregation or Mission to appoint for use psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs which are appropriate for worship. The Rector/Senior Pastor or Vicar/Pastor is the final authority in the administration of matters pertaining to music in the Congregation or Mission.

Canon 6 Of Lay Worship Ministry

Lay persons may be appointed to assist the clergy in various tasks of worship to further the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

Canon 7 Of Christian Marriage

Section 1. As marriage is a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman in which the two become one flesh, it is both an ordinance of Creation affirmed as such by our Lord, and commended by Saint Paul as a sign of the mystical union between Christ and His Church *(Matthew 19:3-9; Ephesians 5:22-32)*, the Diocese affirms our Lord's teaching that Holy Matrimony is in its nature a union permanent and lifelong of one man and one woman.

Section 2. Members of the clergy of the Diocese shall conform to the Canons of this Diocese and the Church governing the solemnization of Holy Matrimony.

a. Both parties shall be baptized. Any exception to this requires the permission of the Bishop;

b. There shall be thirty (30) days notice of intention to marry unless waived for weighty reasons, in which case the Bishop shall be notified immediately and in writing;

c. The clergy shall provide counsel to both parties on Holy Matrimony with respect to theological and social implications and responsibilities;

d. The clergy shall ascertain that the man and woman, parties to the marriage, have a valid marriage license.

e. It shall be within the discretion of any member of the clergy to decline to solemnize any marriage.

Section 3. The Office of the Bishop shall develop and maintain a Customary on Marriage consistent with the teaching of Holy Scripture, the Constitution of this Diocese, and the Constitution and Canons of the Church.

Canon 8 Of Standards of Sexual Morality and Ethics

Section 1. Clergy and lay leaders of this Diocese are called to be exemplary in all spheres of morality as a condition of being appointed to or remaining in office.

Section 2. Sexual intercourse should take place only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. In view of the teaching of Holy Scripture, Resolution 1.10 of the Lambeth Conference of 1998 and the Jerusalem Declaration, this Diocese upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage. Therefore, this Diocese cannot legitimize or bless same sex unions. Nor, since Holy Scripture is clear on the consequences of such behavior *(1 Cor. 6:9 and 1 Tim 1:10)*, shall this Diocese ordain any person who engages in any sexual activity outside the boundary of marriage as described in Title III, Canon 7.

Section 3. God, and not man, is the creator of human life. Therefore, consistent with Article I of the Constitution of this Diocese, all members and clergy are called to promote and respect the sanctity of every human life from conception to natural death.

Section 4. Each Congregation and Mission of this Diocese is called upon to show Christ-like compassion to those who have fallen into sin, encouraging them to repent and receive forgiveness, and offering the ministry of healing to all who suffer physically or emotionally as a result of such sin.

TITLE IV: OF MINISTERS, THEIR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION, ORDINATION, OFFICE, PRACTICE, AND TRANSFER

Canon 1 Of Holy Orders in this Diocese

Section 1. This Diocese affirms what Anglicanism has always held in common, namely the normality and sufficiency of the threefold pastoral ministry of Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon as described in Holy Scripture. Persons shall be admitted to the office of Bishop, Presbyter, or Deacon in this Church, and allowed to exercise any of these offices, who have been called, examined, and ordained according to an authorized ordinal of this Church or ordained in some church whose orders are recognized and accepted by this Church.

Section 2. Any person who has received authority to be a Presbyter or Deacon in this Church owes canonical obedience in all things lawful and honest to the Bishop having jurisdiction, and the Bishop of this Diocese owes canonical obedience in all things lawful and honest to the Archbishop of the Church.

Section 3. Under the direction of the Bishop, The Office of the Bishop shall develop and maintain a suitable customary or customaries on the recruitment, preparation, ordination, office, practice, and transfer of Ministers, consistent with the teaching of Holy Scripture *(especially, but not limited to, 1 Timothy 3:1-*13; *5:17; and Titus 1:6-9)*, the Constitution of this Diocese, and the Constitution and Canons of the Church.

Section 4. The qualifications for persons seeking ordination into Holy Orders in this Diocese shall, except as provided herein, conform to the standards of ordination for clergy that have already been established in the Constitution and Canons of the Church.

Canon 2 Concerning Ordination and Reception of Ministers

Section 1. Persons desiring to be ordained in this Diocese, and ministers from other jurisdictions who seek to be received into this Diocese, shall apply in writing to the Bishop or those to whom the Bishop delegates such authority. Applicants shall be provided a copy of this Canon 2 and, should they wish to continue seeking ordination or reception, they shall follow the process established by the Bishop and those to whom the Bishop delegates such authority and in accordance with these canons. The ordination or reception process shall include an independent background check covering the following: the checking of all references and previous employers for the previous ten (10) years, credit reports, the checking of records from Departments of Motor Vehicles, and a complete criminal records check to include the Sexual Predators Directory.

Section 2. No person shall be received as clergy in this Diocese until they shall have subscribed in writing and agree to annually resubscribe to the following declaration:

"*I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to salvation, and I consequently hold myself bound to conform my life and ministry thereto, and I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of Christ as this Church has received them.*"

Section 3. The Bishop, being fully satisfied of a person's theological and other qualifications, and soundness in the faith, and upon successful completion of examination as provided in the Customaries for Ordination, Transfer, or Reception may ordain persons in this Diocese, or receive clergy from other churches or jurisdictions into this Diocese as provided in this Canon 2.

Section 4. The Bishop, being fully satisfied of a person's theological and other qualifications, and soundness in the faith, may receive bishops from other jurisdictions of the Church into this Diocese, with or without examination, to serve as Rector/Senior Pastor of a Congregation or Mission or as a Bishop in Residence in a Congregation or Mission, or to serve in a ministry of this Diocese. A bishop so received shall owe canonical obedience in all things lawful and honest to the Bishop of this Diocese.

TITLE V: ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE

Canon 1 Church Discipline

Every member of the clergy canonically resident in this Diocese or licensed by the Bishop to exercise ministry in this Diocese shall be subject to the disciplinary provisions of Title IV of the Canons of the Church and to the provisions of these Canons. Every member of the laity of this diocese shall be subject to the disciplinary rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer authorized by the Bishop and in use in the lay person's Congregation or Mission.

Canon 2 Rules and Procedures

Consistent with these Canons and those of the Church, the Trial Court shall develop and maintain its own Customary on Rules and Procedures for Ecclesiastical Discipline.

Canon 3 Compliance with the Applicable Canons of the Church

In conducting a trial, the Trial Court shall comply with all applicable Canons of the Church.

TITLE VI: ENACTMENT, AMENDMENT, AND REPEAL OF CANONS

Canon 1 Amendments

The Canons of the Diocese may be amended by the Synod at any regular meeting or any Special Meeting called for that purpose. Notice in advance of the meeting must be given before an amendment can be adopted. No amendment may be adopted until it has been reviewed by the Team on Constitution and Canons or the Council of the Diocese and its recommendations given to the Synod. The Canons may only be amended by the Synod by a two-thirds majority of those delegates present. The Council of the Diocese shall have no authority or power to amend the Canons.

TITLE VII: OF CUSTOMARIES AND THEIR UTILITY

Canon 1 The Definition and Use of Customaries in this Diocese

Section 1. As referenced in these Canons, a customary is understood to be and defined as a set of standards, guidelines, and procedures used to establish governance processes in and for the Diocese, consistent with the teaching of Holy Scripture, the Constitution of this Diocese, and the Constitution and Canons of the Church.

Section 2. The use of customaries, rather than Canon Law, to ensure alignment with the mission and ministry of the Diocese allows for the formalizing of certain processes of governance, deemed necessary by the Office of the Bishop, without the need for Canonical amendment to adjust those processes that no longer best serve the interests of the mission and ministry of the Diocese. This allows for a more natural and relational approach to the normative governance of the Diocese. In the governance of the Diocese, the Bishop, his officers, the clergy, and the laity function under the authority of Holy Scripture, the Constitution and Canons of the Church, and the Constitution and Canons of this Diocese. In like manner, the customaries must also function under and be in alignment with the authority of Holy Scripture, the Constitution and Canons of the Church, and the Constitution and Canons of this Diocese.

Certification

We Certify that the foregoing is the text of the Canons of the Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast adopted provisionally by the delegates to the 2nd Synod of the Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast, meeting at Spring, Texas on November 10, in the year of our Lord 2012, and subject to ratification by the Anglican Church of North America.

The Rev. Clark W. P. Lowenfield
Chairman of the Steering Team Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast

The Rev. Jennifer Scherzer
Secretary and Registrar Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast